Clatsop County Historical Society Quarterly

CUMTUX

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IMAGE COURTESY OF JIM AALBERG

AN AERIAL VIEW OF THE COMMUNITY OF WESTPORT, OREGON AND THE WESTERLY PORTION OF THE WESTPORT SLOUGH. SEPTEMBER 25, 1954

In This Issue . . .

How many rivers in Clatsop County can you name? That might not be too hard. —Now, how many slough can you name? Most of the rivers have a Native American origin, but where did the names of the sloughs come from? Jim Aalberg searched records, old and new, for the answers. These he presents in the first story in this issue along with their locations. Jim encountered many inconsistencies on the maps he studied and is asking help to make sense of them.

Dea Canary writes about her close encounter with wild animals on the Heckard Slough.

Thomas Smith writes about the history of a house in Surf Pines he once owned that the rest of us can only dream about. For some of the residents, this grand house seemed to be alive with malignant spirits that turned the dreams into nightmares. Tom hopes that there will be more stories will appear in *Cumtux* about this part of the county.

The last story is the final installment of the first section of the book by John E. Seeborg, "A Finn From Astoria." The complete book is here in the Archives and is available for members and visitors to read. We are grateful to John's nephew, Larry Seeborg, for making us aware of this book and his help in printing the stories.

—The Editor

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Image of Wayne Saiget looking at bamboo poles used on troller fishing boats. Photo by Allen Saiget, ca. 1942

CCHS Image #21.001.056.009

CUMTUX: Chinook jargon:
"To know...to inform"

A Slew of Sloughs
The Marshy Inlets Of Clatsop County

By Jim Aalberg

Slough \ ˈslü (noun) from Middle High German slouche, meaning a ditch:

1. an area of soft, muddy ground
2. a swamp or swamp-like region
3. a hole full of mire, like one that can form in a road
4. a condition of degradation, despair, or helplessness

- **In the Northwest:** a sluggish side channel of a river
- **On the Pacific Coast:** a marshy saltwater inlet
- **In the Prairies:** a large hole where water collects or the water in such a hole.

As for the noun "slew," it is an American colloquialism from the early 19th century. Its origins are unclear, but perhaps it is taken from the Irish-Gaelic "sluagh," meaning "multitude." "Slew" has several homographs; as a verb, "slew" is the past tense of "slay": "slew" as a spelling variant of "slough." The verb "slew" has a meaning "to turn, veer, or skid." Of course, in my title, I am going with "multitude." Best to leave further discussion to the etymologist and move on to the story of the sloughs of Clatsop County.

The sloughs of the Lower Columbia River are like throbbing veins webbing out from the primary artery of the mighty river, pulsating with the ebbing tides of the Pacific. As one can see from topographical maps, it is often difficult to determine where a slough begins and ends, some merging and uniting with adjacent sloughs, rivers, and creeks. Throughout the years, these inlets have offered a safe harbor for boats, served as points of distribution for goods, and served as part of the extensive water highways of the Lower Columbia. Even though their importance to coastal life and commerce is well documented, it seems that not every slough of Clatsop County has been honored with a name. So, for the intrepid explorer, naming rights appear to still be available for some of these orphan sluggish side channels.

These sloughs' ecosystems offer wonderful outdoor adventures, including kayaking, hiking, fishing, waterfowl hunting, wildlife viewing, and beautiful fauna.

A Highway for Logs

The dumping, booming, and rafting of logs occurred on many of the region's tidal sloughs to supply regional sawmills. Many of these sloughs are affected by the tides and are considered tidal waters. For generations, they were used to facilitate

the dumping and movement of logs. Tidal gates were constructed and installed to maximize the sloughs' draft and width in those specifically used for transporting logs.

The use of these "tidal waters" for log transportation resulted in various legal actions. The Oregon State Supreme Court ruled in 1890 that the portion above the Mean High Tide was not a navigable waterway, which meant no dredging or widening of small streams or gully areas that could have been used to feed logs into these tidewater sloughs. Also, other legal battles arose around the driving of pilings into these waterways to construct log booms if it prevented a landowner from using the slough or creek for navigation.

Several major legal battles involving the transporting of logs centered on what defined a "navigable waterway" that these loggers could use. Farmers along these sloughs continued to bring suits, and the Oregon Supreme Court heard several.

These sloughs were diked, filled, dammed, blocked, and modified to claim back tideland for pastures, farming, or to accommodate the movement of logs.

Many of these sloughs also acted as a means for traveling to school, moving farming production and mail, visiting the mercantile, and, of course, served as waterways to and from the major water highway, the Columbia. Many of the larger sloughs also met the requirements to safely harbor boats and accommodate wharves and docks off the Columbia's main shipping channel.

From historical and current maps and various articles and directories, I found the following named sloughs in Clatsop County starting upriver in the east then west to the Pacific.

Sloughs Neighboring the Columbia River

The county's most "prominent" slough systems are likely the Westport and Blind sloughs. This is based on the history of commercial development along these sloughs and their navigational usage going back to the 1860s. However, all the county sloughs have their own stories to tell, and each exhibits its unique topographic character.

Westport Slough

The slough's wide mouth meets the Columbia at River Mile 43 and then meanders more than ten miles eastward toward the community of Clatskanie. Before the late 1930s, it was navigable from its mouth to where it connected to the Clatskanie River in old town Clatskanie. It was a major migrating salmon route; this connection was plugged by a levee in 1936 and later topped with a county road as part of improvements authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1936. The Act was to provide flood protection to

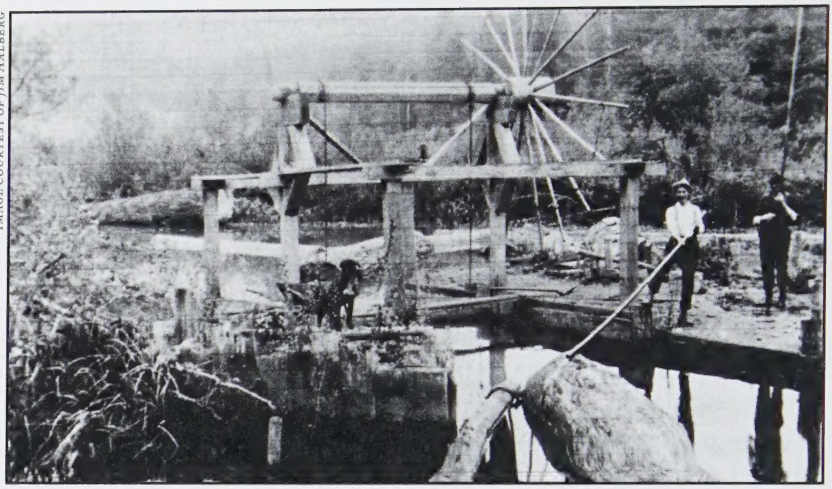


Image courtesy of Jim Aalberg

Tide gate at Westport Slough, ca. 1880

agricultural lands. Large culverts have been installed in the levee, and the slough once again connects to the Clatskanie River.

Originally called West Slough and named for John West, who in 1851 held a Donation Land Claim in the area of 640 acres. West built wharves and docks, a general store with a post office, salmon cannery, and a steam-powered sawmill on the banks of the slough.

The story goes that in 1868, John West changed the name at the recommendation of the wife of Captain Whyte of the *Onward* when they stayed at John West's home during the weeks-long loading of the vessel. She recommended that Westport was a far better name for a village than West Slough. The *Onward* was a British three-masted square-rigger that carried the first Australia-bound lumber from the Pacific Northwest processed at John West's steam-powered sawmill when the couple and crew set sail. Sawmilling operations existed on the slough banks for over a century, from 1865 until ceasing in 1971. Westport is likely the most commercially developed slough in Clatsop County history and the only one to be dredged periodically to assure adequate draft for large cargo ships.

A narrow arm of the slough, located near its mouth on the Columbia, flows in a westerly direction adjacent to the railroad tracks towards Wauna and ends near the most easterly tip of Driscoll Slough. In the 1930s and 1940s, the homes in this area were referred to as Greek Camp.

For some time, the state has proposed to connect nearby Beaver Slough to the Westport Slough, which would open miles of improved spawning and rearing habitat on the Lower Columbia for

Coho and Chinook salmon, though nothing has come of it yet.

Driscoll Slough

Its mouth is on the Columbia River channel near the eastern property line of the paper mill at Wauna. The slough flows inland under a railroad trestle, then meanders north of Hwy 30 in an easterly direction towards Westport. In the late 1890s, Thomas J., Clarence, Cornelius, and James Driscoll (a farmer) lived in the area. In the late 1930s, Tim Driscoll operated a mink farm on property adjacent to the slough. The slough was the homeport for the towboats *Fleetwood* and *Ketchikan* owned by Walter Lendten. A prominent distinction from other towboats in the area was their color: both had a barn-red deckhouse.

Fish buyers and those in charge of the receiving stations were an essential part of the salmon fishing business. Jim Hansen and his son Clarence Hansen operated a station at Driscoll Slough near Wauna. They bought fresh catch from the fishermen in the Skamokawa, Cathlamet, and Puget Island area.

The Driscoll home, later owned by the Gann family, and the Hansen home still stand today and are owned by the Georgia Pacific Corporation, the pulp and paper mill owner at Wauna.

Blind Slough

Blind Slough is one of the largest slough systems in the County. It twists and turns for miles with multiple branches. Located near Brownsmead, its opening is on the Prairie Channel of the Columbia River, just east of the river docks at Knappa. Gnat Creek flows into the tidal portion of Blind Slough and was first recorded on survey maps in 1856.

In the late 1890s, there was also a reference to a Gnat Slough in this area. Also, there were references to a Grand Slough and a Minaker Slough in this general area. It meanders seemingly in circles towards Aldrich Point. It enters the Knappa Slough behind Karlson Island at River Mile 27. The most prominent appendage suddenly pushes out around one of its many bends and turns, which is likely the reason for its name. In May of 1910, the Blind Slough post office was established, with the first postmaster being John W. Crow. After having four postmasters, it closed on December 15, 1924, and mail then went to the post office in Brownsmead. Blind Slough and the adjacent swampland are home to giant old-growth Sitka spruce. The area is a favorite for bird hunters, canoers, and kayakers. In 1992, James River Corporation donated 640 acres bordering the slough to The Nature Conservatory as a nature area and wildlife refuge.

The Upper Slough School was located on Blind Slough, and transportation to and from was by rowboat. In 1914, the Blind Slough Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Congregation was formed with services in Finnish and was a part of the Suomi Synod, as the national network of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church of America was known. Several floating houses were anchored along the slough, many of which were occupied by commercial fishermen. The S. P.& S. Railway had a stop at Blind Slough.

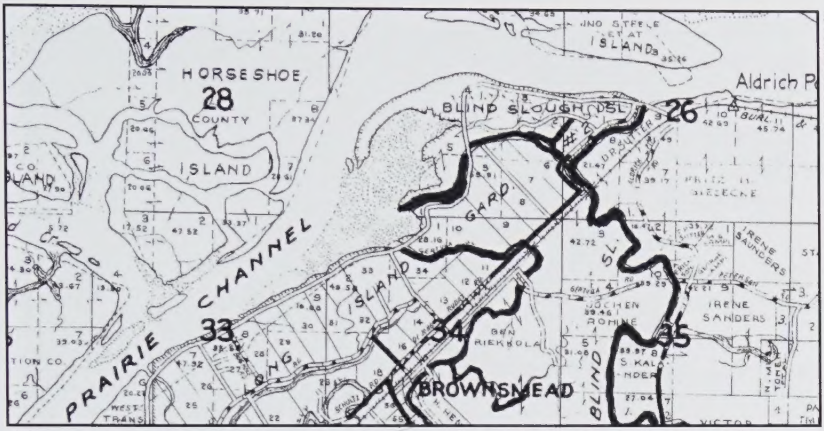
San Francisco-based pulp and paper company Crown Zellerbach used the slough as a dumping ground, storage, and transportation highway for its logs. Log booms were built by securing pilings and dolphins. From these storage areas, log rafts would be towed to the mills.

Several logging camps operated along the slough from the late 1880s to the early 1920s. The Blind Slough Logging Camp commenced operations in the area circa 1883. The Larkin-Green Logging Company was also located in Blind Slough about 1915. This logging company employed over 300 men and was one of the more extensive logging operations in the county; it dissolved in 1931.

The S. P. & S. Railway had operated the Blind Slough Station, and the train would make a brief stop to pick up and throw off the mailbag and deliver the paper and, of course, any passengers. Matt Raihala operated a general store near where the railroad trestle crossed over the slough. The store was later moved to a location near the Gnat Creek Bridge.

"Gertulla" Slough

The 1930 Metsker Map shows a Gertulla Slough flowing into the Prairie Channel near Bug Hole on the Columbia River near Brownsmead. A "Gertulla" Road is also shown on this 1930 map. This slough is evident in this same area on current topographical maps, but it is not named. There is no evidence of the "Gertulla" Slough name on more recent maps, and it appears that it became absorbed as part of the Blind Slough network of waterways. Finnish immigrants John and Amanda Gerttula settled along the slough near Brownsmead in 1888. John built a sail-powered scow to haul freight between Astoria and the Blind Slough area. He built dikes to reclaim the tideland, and he erected and operated a dairy. He also had a boat-building operation on Blind Slough and constructed over seventy gill-netters. To supply the lumber for the boats, he built a sawmill near Zaspel Slough—there was a Zaspel family (German surname) in the area, though no such slough named for them exists on maps today.



METSKER MAP FROM 1974 SHOWING A PORTION OF BLIND SLOUGH AND GERTULLA SLOUGH.

GRIZZLY SLOUGH

Its mouth is at the northern bank of Blind Slough, near where Blind Slough enters the Prairie Channel. One of its two main branches winds its way in a northeasterly direction on Long Island towards the tiny community of Brownsmead, staying north of the railroad line, and the other branch heads east and under the railroad trestle.

SASPA SLOUGH

Located east of the railroad tracks near the community of Brownsmead. Before levee and dike construction, this slough likely connected as a branch of the much larger Blind Slough. No listing of this slough name on current county maps.

RED SLOUGH

It flows for approximately one and a half miles between Welch Island and Tenasillahe Island, a short distance upriver from Aldrich Point. Maps dated in the early 1880s show the slough's name as the Multnomah Slough. However, residents in the area referred to it as Red Slough. In 1986, the U.S. Board of Geographic Names officially changed the name from Multnomah to Red, citing confusion with Multnomah Channel near Sauvie Island sixty miles upriver.

KNAPPA SLOUGH

In 1891, the community of Knappa and the Knappa Slough were named for Aaron Knapp, Jr., a pioneer settler in the area. On the southern shores of Karlson Island, the slough runs from a point west of the Knappa docks, then first turns east and eventually north, where it merges with the mouth of Blind Slough, then continues into Prairie Channel. Both Big Creek Slough and Calendar Slough merge with the westerly end of Knappa Slough.

CCHS IMAGE #12.095.001

Sorting logs on Blind Slough.

Riverview Hall (a dance hall owned by James Coulter), the Knapp Hotel owned by Jacob Bender, as well as the Hufstater store, a post office, and a barbershop owned by Sterling Hughes were all located on the slough in the 1880s. The name "Knappa Slough" is shown on current topographical maps but is not named on the county's web map.

Warren Slough

The slough frames the north side of the Knappa area and has two openings to the Knappa Slough just upstream of the docks at Knappa Landing. The slough's main body oxbows back to its entrance to Knappa Slough in a circular pattern. It has two separate branches off its main body, both running in a northeasterly direction—the slough strays on the riverside of the railroad tracks.

Real property records between 1869–1890 show brothers Daniel K. Warren and George W. Warren owning a sizable amount of acreage abutting the slough. The 1860 census records show Daniel Warren arriving at age twenty-three to the area and was listed as a farmer from New York state. An 1875 map displayed a "Warren's Landing," later shown on maps as "Knappa Landing." John F. Warren also recorded a homestead claim in 1885. This was the site of their logging operation. Daniel K. Warren later platted the town of Warrenton, named for him. George W. Warren drowned while logging here.

Big Creek Slough

Located between the southern shoreline of Karlson Island and the northern shoreline of Minaker Island downriver from Knappa. Its western mouth opens into the Prairie Channel, and to the east, it merges with Calendar Slough, and then both sloughs merge into the Knappa Slough and ultimately into the Prairie Channel. Big Creek was initially known by the Clatsop Indian name of Tillasana Creek. It later went by Tilly Ann Creek and Tilly Jane Creek, but by the 1890s, Big Creek and Big Creek Slough prevailed. The Big Creek Slough is not named on the county's web map. However, it is shown on current topographic maps.

Calendar Slough

The 1930 Metsker map (as do current topographic maps of the area) shows Calendar Slough flowing along the southern shoreline of Minaker Island and merging with Big Creek Slough to the east as they both merge into the Knappa Slough. The current county maps show Calendar Slough as a much narrower body of water inland to the south.

Svensen Slough

At river mile twenty-four, the original town of Svensen was located on the waterfront of Svensen Slough, the body of water that separates Svensen Island from the mainland. The post office was established in 1891 with Victor H. Coffey as postmaster. There was a general store on the waterfront owned by Elmer Coe. This slough name is not shown on the county's web map or current topographical maps; however, it continues to be referred to by many as the Svensen Slough—named for Swedish settler Peter Svensen.

Sloughs neighboring the Youngs River:

Cooperage Slough

Empties into the Youngs River on its east shore, up river from Battle Creek Slough and downriver from where the Klaskanine River flows into Youngs River. The slough is several miles northeast of the small community of Olney. It has two branches stretching to the east and a large branch flowing south that eventually divides into two more branches. It appears to merge with the river in two separate locations. It is unknown who had the cooperage for which the slough is named.

Binder Slough

This slough has just one significant bend in its run. It is located just east of Youngs River Road and comes close to the connection with an arm of the Youngs River. This slough owes its name to Charles Binder, a German immigrant who settled in the area in the 1850s and took up a claim along what would become his eponymous waterway. Binder operated a bakery in Astoria until his death in 1875, leaving his wife, Sophie Schmeer, a widow owning the property adjacent to the slough. She then married Louis Kirchoff. Their house is still standing in Astoria on the NW corner of 12th & Franklin.

Casey Slough

A small slough on the west bank of the Youngs River near Haven Island, where Binders Slough Lane intersects with Youngs River Loop Road. Casey Slough almost connects to the northern tip of Binder Slough. It is named after John Casey, a bachelor and early pioneer resident of the unincorporated area, who also lent his name to the post office established on the Youngs River in 1903, with Catherine Quinn serving as the inaugural postmistress.

According to a 1910 edition of Polk's Directory, Postmistress Quinn had taken the name Catherine Wood after marrying local blacksmith James Wood. She was the niece of John Casey and executrix of his estate. Other notable residents of the area at this time include the stockbreeders

Gus Niemela, F. Palv, P. Raske, and Victor Winters. Also located in Casey were the logging companies Bremner Logging Co. and Chism & Hepburn as well as the Falls Pulp Mill. The post office closed in 1911, with the mail rerouted twelve miles north to Astoria.

Tucker Slough

This slough has its mouth on the east bank of the Youngs River just upriver from Casey Slough, again near Haven Island, located in the center of the Youngs River. The slough winds its way south for several miles. It is named for a wood scow operator who felled timber in the area to bring over to Astoria for sale. Tucker Creek flows into the slough. This slough is not named on the county's web map but is shown on current topographical maps.

Battle Creek Slough

Its mouth is on the west bank of the Youngs River just upriver from the mouths of both the Casey and Tucker Sloughs; again, all these sloughs are near the southern end of Haven Island. The story goes that it was so named due to an early boundary dispute between two area farmers Barney Gallagher and Mr. Nusser. This slough is not named on the county's web map.

Cook Slough

The slough runs for miles from the north, where it enters the Youngs River at Wireless Road just upriver from the Youngs Bay bridge. Daggett Point is the outcropping of land to the east of the slough. The slough meanders south for several miles. According to an 1870 survey map, the name was Cook's Slough. In 1915 the Board of Geographic Names made the name Cook Slough. It was named for George Washington Cook, who was born in 1818 in Rutland, Vermont. He arrived in Oregon in 1850 and married a Clatsop Indian slave named Mary and served as a county coroner.

Before they settled on the slough, George Washington Cook took out a donation land claim on the south side of Astoria, including 7th Street. He later took out a homestead claim on the Klatskanine River. He died in 1872. His wife ended up proving up on the last claim along with her third husband.

Nolens Slough

This ox-bowing slough runs parallel to the western bank of Cook Slough. It comes close to merging with Cook Slough at one point near Stoner Road. It was named for J. F. Nolen, who operated a large dairy adjacent to the slough.

Sloughs neighboring the Lewis and Clark River

Jeffers Slough

Its mouth is located on the east bank of the Lewis & Clark River, west of Miles Crossing, and just up river from the Lewis & Clark River bridge. It splits into two branches, one flowing to the north and the other to the south. Joseph Jeffers owned several hundred acres of flatland along the eastern bank of the Lewis & Clark River, near where the river empties into Youngs Bay, and the north shore of the slough. This property is known as the unincorporated community of Jeffers Garden. The slough drains into the Lewis and Clark River just west of Miles Crossing, another unincorporated community in the area.

Barrett Slough

Upriver from Jeffers Slough, its mouth is near Fort Clatsop on the eastern shoreline of Lewis & Clark River. It stretches to the south for several miles, then oxbows off to the east. Earlier, it likely merged with the river.

Green Slough

The head of this slough is located a short distance from the Barrett Slough on the east bank of the Lewis & Clark River near Fort Clatsop. Both the Barrett and Green Sloughs run parallel to each other in a southerly direction. Green to the west and Barrett to the east. The 1930 Metsker map shows its mouth merges with the river but not currently. It stretches to the south and has three primary branches. The source of the name is unknown.

Johnson Slough

The mouth of the slough is located on the west bank of the Lewis & Clark River upriver from Fort Clatsop. The slough oxbows to the south and is cut in half by the Fort Clatsop Road. This slough is shown on the 1930 Metsker map and the county's current web map. However, the county's web map also shows a Johnson Slough upriver on the east bank; the 1930 Metkser map shows this slough as Peterson Slough, as do the current topographical maps.

In the late 1890s, Johnson Slough was also referred to as Heckard Slough and by some as Douglas Slough.

The source of the name is unknown.

Peterson Slough

Located along the east bank of Lewis & Clark River a mile or so upriver from the mouth of the Johnson Slough. As is the case with the Johnson Slough mentioned above, the mouth of the Peterson Slough at one time likely merged with the river. The county's web map names this slough Johnson Slough, not Peterson Slough. The source of

the name is unknown, possibly G.F. Peterson.

Heckard Slough

This waterway spills into the west side of the Lewis and Clark River across from the Netel Grange. It is named for Peter Bartholomew Heckard, born in Ohio in 1830 and applied for his homestead claim in 1871. He was a farmer who carried the mail by boat to residents along the river. The slough name is not shown on the county's web map.

Sloughs Neighboring Warrenton

Adams Slough

The mouth of this slough, at one time, flowed into the southern shore of Youngs Bay near the Youngs Bay Bridge; the airport runway is just to the east. Its course travels south, paralleling the east side of Hwy 101. Vera Creek feeds into the north part of the slough near the west side of the airport runway. Apparently, it is also referred to as Adair Slough, named for Bethenia Owens-Adair, one of the early northwest's women physicians and her husband. There is a historical reference to this slough name in the Warrenton area stating that the old Abercrombie logging camp was located there. Source of name unknown.

Holbrook Slough

The slough flows on both the east and west sides of Highway 101 near S.E. Neptune Drive. Holbrook Slough is basically three separated bodies of water that all connect via the addition of modern culverts under various roadways. Two sections are on the west side of Hwy 101, dissected by E. Harbor Drive, and the third body is on the east side of Hwy 101, neighboring Adams Slough. The main northern body of the sough likely originally flowed into Youngs Bay west of the New Youngs Bay Bridge. The source of the name is unknown.

Skipanon Slough

The slough abuts the eastern shoreline of the northern portion of the Skipanon River near E. Harbor Drive and S.E. Galena Avenue. It meanders south and then west toward Hwy 101. Lewis and Clark called the Skipanon River *Skipanarwi Creek* on their maps. For ease of spelling and pronunciation in 1925, the name was officially changed to Skipanon by the U.S. Board of Geographic Names, an agency established in 1890, and the name of the slough followed suit. There is a reference to Hill's Slough in the early 1900s, which contained at least some portion of what is now known as Skipanon Slough.

Cullaby Slough

Its mouth is on the west shore of the northern portion of Cullaby Lake, just south of where the Skipanon River commences its flow from the lake. The slough's northern point is near Carnahan Park. In 1904, a canal was proposed, which was to have been called the Skipanon Canal. It was to start at Cullaby Lake then connect to the Skipanon River to float logs from the timber country east of Cullaby Lake to the tidewater at Warrenton. The total length was stated at about eight miles, including Cullaby Lake and some portion of Cullaby Slough and Creek to the south and all the way to Warrenton. Apparently, the canal was started but never completed. The slough was named for Indian chief Cullaby, who is buried nearby.

I was not able to locate these slough names on any of the maps: Mud Slough, Red Slough, and Vincent Slough, all in the vicinity of the Young River and a Lobrin Slough, which served as a log dumpsite in 1880 for the Knapp-Sutherland logging company.

Neighboring Sloughs in Columbia County-Between Westport and Clatskanie

The western border of Columbia County has several sloughs brushing up against Clatsop County near the tiny historical communities of Kerry, Woodson, and Marshland. There are seven sloughs in this general area: Kelli Slough, Ludviksen Slough, Uncle Tom Slough, Wallace, Kerry, Randa, and Whiskey Joe.

Keep in mind that Columbia County did not exist until January 16, 1854, so these sloughs were previously part of Clatsop County, formed in 1844. Following are comments on four of these seven sloughs.

Wallace Slough

Wallace Slough separates Wallace Island from the Oregon shoreline, and the Clatskanie River flows into its easterly end. Robert Broughton of the Royal Navy commanded the *HMS Chatham* on the Vancouver Expedition and charted and explored the Columbia River. He noted two rivers in his journal on October 26, 1792 (believing what was, in fact, a slough to be a small river emerging from behind Wallace Island). He named the west entrance "Swaine's River" and the east entrance of the Slough "Manby's River," both after Royal Navy officers. In 1841, Charles Wilkes of the U.S. Exploring Expedition named the Slough "Natsox Run." In 1914, the U.S. Board of Geographic Names made Wallace Slough and Wallace Island official. The name honors Wallace Slang, an early settler who lived on or owned a portion of the island.

The December 4, 1896, issue of the The Daily Morning Astorian

CLATSOP'S GREAT LAND WEALTH—THOUSANDS OF ACRES OF TIDE LANDS SOON IN THE MARKET.

Dikes Can Be Easily and Cheaply Constructed—
Land will Produce Six Tons of Hay Per Acre.

An excerpt from the article reads as follows:

From Westport to Tongue Point the area of overflowed lands, commonly called tide lands, lying in Oregon, is 10,000 acres. From Westport to the upper mouth of the Blind slough, about 15 miles, are patches of tide land, adjoining the mainland. The Blind slough district is one of the most interesting, an in a short time will become one of the most important and valuable portions of Clatsop County.

In 1906, Simon Benson and O.J. Evenson hired J.A. Fastabend to build a massive wooden "cradle" near the mouth of the slough to assemble the famous Benson log rafts. These massive ocean-going tugs towed Pacific Northwest logs to the Benson Lumber Mill in San Diego, California.

Kerry Slough

Appears to be more of a branch of the Westport Slough located on the northside of Kerry Island. Named for Albert Sperry Kerry, Sr., this short slough ebbs and flows with the tides in and out of the Westport Slough. Kerry was the builder and owner of the nearby Kerry Line, a massive logging railroad line constructed in 1916 and operated until 1938. With more than a mile of rail line, a log dumping site operated for over two decades on this slough.

Randa Slough

This waterway flows into the Kerry Slough, which in turn flows into the Westport Slough.

Whiskey Joe Slough

Perhaps named for a moonshine still operation in the area sometime between January 17, 1920 and December 5, 1933, during the government's failed prohibition initiative.

Concluding Thoughts

Much of my research was based on various historical maps, including maps dating back to 1930, prepared by Thomas C. Metsker, referred to as the Metsker Maps. Other resources included slough-related stories in the *Cumtux*, newspaper articles, Polk Directories, and other historical documents available at the Liisa Penner Research Center

and Archives. The current Clatsop County "web maps" show twenty named sloughs in Clatsop County. This article references twenty-nine sloughs in Clatsop County. In my research, it became apparent that many of the slough systems have changed over the past 100 years, from both man-made and natural causes. These man-made changes are particularly evident in the northeast portion of the county. Dikes and levees were constructed to reclaim and maintain land for farming, housing, industrial/commercial uses, and road construction. These impacts dramatically changed the flow of these natural slough systems. Names changed, and some names disappeared over the decades. In any event, these slough ecosystems are dynamic in nature and ever-changing.

I reached out to representatives at the county, and they were extremely helpful. They indicated there would soon be more information regarding our county sloughs on their website. As of May 2021, Clatsop County's web map shows Grizzly, Cook, Casey, Blind, Nolens, Binder, Warren, Jeffers, Johnson, Calendar, Driscoll, Battle Creek, Holbrook, Barrett, Cooperage, Skipanon, Green, Cullaby, Adams, and Westport.

I may have missed some named sloughs and would like to offer readers the opportunity to fill in the blanks. In addition, we should not leave out sloughs domiciled on several of the twenty-two named Clatsop County islands located in the Columbia River. These islands represent a motherload of sloughs. In my research, I found no mention of or names for any of the island sloughs. The named islands starting upriver are Westport (no longer an actual island), Tenasillahe, Welch, Quinns, Grassy (#1), Tronson, Goose, Woody, Horseshoe, Brush, Long, Marsh, Snag, Karlson, Minaker, North, Russian, Svensen, Green, McGregor, Grassy (#2), and Mott. Maybe these islands are the making of a future Cumtux article? How did they get their names? Also, there are still some orphan islands with no names. If the reader knows of any additional slough names and locations, or can add facts and information to the sloughs listed in this article, the Clatsop County Historical Society would be interested in hearing from you.

Email Archivist Liisa Penner at archivist@astorianmuseums.org or author Jim Aalberg at jamesaalberg@gmail.com.

Camping on Heckard Slough

by Dea Canary

Tiffani Heckenburg, K.C. "Bo" Heckenburg, Nathan Castleberry, and I usually camped in the woods, but we decided to do something different one day. We decided to camp down by the water and spend the weekend boating. We picked a spot that looked good and flattened the cutgrass to make an area for the tent. Once camp was set up, we spent the rest of the day playing in the water. Later that evening (about 10 pm), three of us were in our sleeping bags chatting and getting ready to sleep. Bo was still sitting next to the fire when suddenly he started yelling. We climbed out of the tent to find the water had come up over the bank and was quickly putting out the fire. Apparently, no one had bothered to check the tide book.

We decided we would each grab a corner of the tent and head for higher ground which was the area next to the Lewis & Clark River. We had no light with the fire going out, not even the moon, but we knew the general direction we needed to go. I had sandals with one strap over my toes. Bo had rubber boots that were cut off at the ankles, and Tiffani couldn't find her shoes at all. By the time we gave up looking for her shoes, the water was already up to our ankles. We each grabbed a corner of the tent and tarp and started walking towards the river. Every third step, or so, I had to retrieve a shoe that had been stuck in the mud. We only got a little way before Tiffani started complaining about the cut grass hurting her feet, so Bo gave her one of his boots. We made it about another ten feet and heard a shout from Tiffany, and she dropped her corner of the tent. All through the slough, tributaries cut through the area, and Tiffany had fallen about three feet into one...and lost Bo's boot. The water was still rising, and we were having to hold the tent higher and higher. When we finally made it to the river bank, we discovered a row of blackberries blocking it. It took us a few minutes, but we finally found a way to dry land. The entire trek probably took thirty minutes, but it felt like hours.

The bank was very narrow, and the tent just barely fit. Only the two people in the middle of the tent were on level ground. I was on the side next to the river. We settled and were about to fall asleep when the nutria discovered us and started climbing on the tent, trying to nibble on it. Eventually, they lost interest, and we fell asleep. The following day when I woke up, I discovered that we had shifted, and I was no longer on solid ground. I was dangling above the river with the other three holding me in place. Once everything had dried, we packed up and decided to stick with camping in the forest from then on.

The House with the Blue Roof

By Thomas Smith

At the north end of Surf Pines, the gated community north of Gearhart, there is a house at the highest point along Sunset Beach called "The Strawberry Hill." In the early 1980s, this house was created as a monument to Pan-Asian architecture with a cobalt-blue tile roof at the highest point of the new platted properties. Even from the weigh station on Highway 101, this tall house stands out as you look west. It has a storied past and seems to have a curse that has followed all owners until the current owner, a well-respected insurance broker from an old Astoria family, took possession. This is a brief history of the house and its unique owners.

Once upon a time, there was a car salesman named Merrill Bloxom, who lived in the central Washington town of Yakima. This town is located in the middle of apple country and many of his customers were apple producers.

They complained that a large majority of their shipped apples would become damaged and bruised. This was because the apples were packed loosely in boxes and were bounced around significantly in transit. As a result, a large percentage of their shipments become unsalable.

One-night Merrill woke up and had a great idea. He produced a cardboard insert that separated the apples in the apple boxes. This had never been done before and his design was truly unique. It had pockets for each Apple so that you'd have one layer of cardboard, a layer of apples, another layer of cardboard and stack it until you'd filled the box up.

He patented the idea and ended up becoming quite wealthy from this invention. He also was a great fan of the Oregon coast and used to come to the coast quite often. In March 1981, he and his wife Jan bought an acre lot at the top of Strawberry Hill. This was a new addition to the gated community of Surf Pines. The hill is the tallest point on the western dunes of the Clatsop Plains. It is about 135 feet in height and was only a couple hundred feet from the Sunset Beach access point.

The new house was designed by architect Ed Weber of Yakima, Washington. Weber took into consideration the wind factor and angled the house so the two main outside decks could be put to their best use. Generally, one or the other is protected from the wind. However, he was from Yakima.

Photo courtesy of Thomas Smith

The House with the Blue Roof

Construction of the house started in 1983. The general contractor was Loren Barger from Yakima Wash. The fact that both were from Yakima had some interesting impacts on this house seventeen years later, when the house suffered water damage.

As you all know, we do have different weather on the NW coast.

Merrill and his wife Jan contracted a well-known landscape architect, Hoichi Kurisu, to design and do the Japanese landscaping, fishpond and the two waterfalls. The rocks used in the landscaping were quarried from the Youngs River falls area. The original roof on the house was blue tile imported from Japan and weighed over 35,000 lbs. This house could be seen from Highway 101 and was named by locals as "The House with the Blue Roof."

The original house did not have a guest room, even though the house had over 5,100 sq. feet at the time. The third floor was a hot tub room whose floor slowly revolved (still does) in a full circle. The 2nd floor is the master bedroom suite.

Lastly, the 1st floor had the kitchen and great room and to the right of the front door is a bath and bedroom. However, the Bloxom's primary home was in Yakima and Merrill used that bedroom as his home office whenever they were here. All floors were connected to a central glassed elevator. The area above the garage, now a family room, was Merrill's storage room for the 200+ kites he had collected from around the world.

Jan and Merrill obviously enjoyed mirrors; old pictures show many more than it has now. The grapevine has it that Jan and Merrill

Photo courtesy of Thomas Smith

Round bed in the rotating room.

decided to sell the property for health reasons. There were other rumors about family discord and that may have started the infamous curse of "The House with the Blue Roof."

The next owners purchased the property in January of 1988. They too must've loved living here. Their additions show it. They enlarged the decks, added the huge fire pit area and a jacuzzi room with his and her bathrooms.

At the time, the jacuzzi upstairs was a large sunken step-down-into unit. They removed the hot tub and the wet bar, then closed in the third floor. They added a full bath with a nice marble floor in the shower where the hot tub had been. They put in a round bed that sat in the center of the room, so it rotated.

They enlarged the area above the garage, finished and divided it into two small rooms as bedrooms for the children, added a big room as a family playroom and a full bath. All these changes increased the size of the house to its current size, over 6,600 square feet.

Many people were quite curious how the manager of a canning plant could afford this house and all the additions and changes. Well, eventually everyone found out. It appears that he had a side business selling drugs and funded this with monies from the retirement accounts from his company. In short time, his family fell apart and we understand he received free lodging at a state institution.

Subsequently, the house was left vacant and it wasn't until a few years later that a company based out of Saudi Arabia purchased it. They hired a designer from Texas who did a complete interior decoration

Photo courtesy of Thomas Smith

The game table with executive chairs.

with top-of-the-line furniture and electronics.

That fall, several of the neighbors close to the House with the Blue Roof were contacted about buying their homes. It was later found that the new owner of the house wanted a place to keep his extended family when he visited. None of the local neighbors took him up on his offer.

Later in December, the new owner decided to visit his new house on the Oregon coast and brought his stable of horses to ride on the beach. Since he was unable to purchase the houses surrounding his house, he rented an entire floor of the Seaside Shilo hotel for his entourage of wives and kids.

The new owner now has been identified as a prince of Saudi Arabia. Unfortunately, his visit was not much fun for him. After a disastrous ride on the beach during one of our infamous winter storms, he stormed off with his group and went home never to return.

Now here is where the curse of the House with the Blue Roof affected the Prince. Ten days before the attack on 9/11, the prince was replaced in his position in the Saudi royal family. It was explained in the media that he was one of several who supported Osama bin Laden and was ostracized by the Saudi family as a result.

After several years of neglect and ensuing water damage the House with the Blue Roof was not doing well. Many of the local agents tried to convince the Saudi owners to try and sell the house. Finally, in 1998, they agreed to put the house on the market.

Now, here is where I got involved with the House with the Blue Roof.

It was July 4, 1998 and I did not win the lottery.

There's a very good reason why I wanted to win the lottery. I really wanted the House with the Blue Roof with its incredible views. Unfortunately, I did not win. In fact, the only lottery I have ever won in my life was number thirty-five on the all-time draft list for Vietnam. I was bummed, since this house has fascinated me, since my soon-to-become wife first moved here in 1992.

After a night of tossing and turning trying to figure out a way to buy this house, finally, around four in the morning, I figured it out.

One of the reasons we moved back to the coast is we had recently sold our company in Seattle and we had some cash available. However, there was extensive water damage to the house and I have absolutely no building skills with my five left thumbs.

Not knowing how or what it would cost to make these repairs if we bought the house, my plan was to partner with a contractor friend, who built my house here in Surf Pines, to see if we could afford it.

He loved the idea and we proceeded to make an incredibly low-ball bid on the house. That year the tax value of the house was a bit over $1.4 million. We offered $750,000 or about half of the tax value, not figuring we would get any response at all. To our amazement, a few days later they accepted our offer with $5,000 in earnest money.

Then we had to scramble. The good news was that we befriended the branch manager of Western Bank, which is now the Bank of the Pacific in Astoria. He helped us obtain a $1 million home equity line of credit based on the tax value of the House with the Blue Roof. This allowed us to purchase the house with an additional $250,000 to remodel and repair damage to it.

Amazingly, the purchase of the house included all the furniture and appliances. Well, we obviously had to clean out all the contents before we could start our repair and remodel.

So, like any other red-blooded American, we decide to have an estate sale. The problem was we were talking about top-of-the-line furniture and electronics like Bang and Olufsen. We located a firm that specialized in estate sales. We told them we would handle the marketing and advertisements, but we needed their help in pricing and working on the day of the sale. As a result, we found some very interesting things.

First the values of the furnishings were "first cabin." The second thing we found is why the Prince and his guys wanted the women and kids kept away at the Shilo.

We found one of the best stocked bars I have ever seen. (I still have some exotic liqueurs from that bar).

We also found that their satellite system had a huge collection of XXX rated pornography channels. Even their dining room table flipped into an eight-person poker table with executive chairs that we found were worth $2,500 each.

So, we scheduled our sale on the same Saturday the annual antique car shows occurred in Long Beach and Seaside. We were concerned that the House with the Blue Roof had such notoriety that we would be inundated with non-buying "lookie loos." As a result, we decided to charge a five-dollar entry fee, which we planned to donate to Clatsop Animal Shelter and the local Habitat for Humanity.

The sale was a complete success. We raised over $2,500 in entry fees, which we donated to both charities. In fact, I remember one person saying that she had not heard about the sale till she saw the signs on Highway 101. Several people nearby said, "Didn't you hear the radio ads?"

We ended up making over $30,000 on that estate sale (the best I have ever done for sure).

After the sale, we started the remodel and repair. We thought the damage was because of the tile roof so we decided to remove it and put a regular shingle roof up instead. We found that it had not been necessary. However, the house with the blue roof is now a house with a brown roof. It turned out most of the water damage occurred because the architect and contractor from Yakima had used Dravite stucco and single pane aluminum windows. All recommended and installed by the Yakima Gang.

My partner and I had agreed that if we were not able to sell the house within six months of the repair completion, one of us could buy out the other. About the same time, my wife and I purchased the Cabbage Rose convenience store in Sunset Beach and remodeled it as the Sunset Beach Bakery.

Well, our interests had changed, and we wanted to buy an expensive baking oven. So, he bought out my interest in the house and we got our new oven.

A few years later, after we had sold the bakery and had moved over to Spokane, we heard that my partner was hit by the curse and had to move out. So, the house sat empty for another few years.

We were away from this area for about five years and heard rumors that the house that used to have a blue roof was purchased by another couple. We also had heard that the curse had hit them as well and that she had passed away and he had some major issues.

So again, the house sat empty for several years till a local business owner and his wife decided to buy it.

So far, the curse has not reared its ugly head. Maybe it is because the current owner is from an old family

Image courtesy of Jim Aalberg

A picnic on the southern bank of the Westport S
In the background is a barge loaded with excess hog pl

ORT SLOUGH NEAR ITS MOUTH ON THE COLUMBIA RIVER.
OG FUEL FROM THE WESTPORT LUMBER COMPANY MILL. CA. 1921

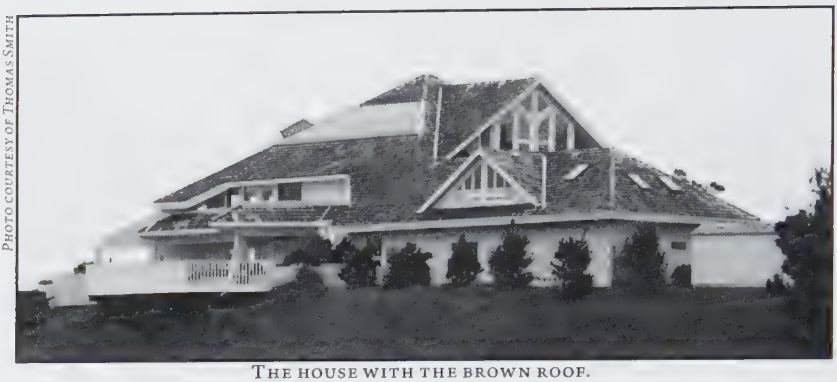


Photo courtesy of Thomas Smith

The house with the brown roof.

that has been in this area since the mid 19th century. So conceivably he is immune to the bad Ju Ju of the house that used to have a blue roof.

So, what does the story of the House with the Blue Roof have to do with Surf Pines and the Clatsop Plains? Well in answer, it has a lot to do with the history of development of the North Coast of Oregon and Surf Pines. This story is one of many that show how crazy development of the Clatsop Plains has been since the founding families first settled here on their Donation Land Claims.

Earlier this year, after returning to Surf Pines to retire again, we noticed that the 50th anniversary of the Surf Pines Association was July 2, 2019. This story was part of a presentation we produced for our annual association meeting.

Once started and being a bit of an amateur historian, we quickly found out that unlike Astoria, Warrenton, Gearhart, Seaside and other areas of the county with a lot of history, our Clatsop Plains is the wayward offspring that no one seems to love.

Mac Burns, from CCHS, mentioned that even his archives are woefully short on historical information for the Clatsop Plains. So, hopefully, this will be the start of several historical stories about the Clatsop Plains.

A Finn from Astoria

By John E. Seeborg

High School Days

Arvid and I entered high school in September of 1932 as sophomores. Astoria High School was then located on Jerome Street at the top of 16th Street. I had continued carrying newspapers so had not tried out for any sports, but Arvi desired nothing more than to excel in athletics. When he earned a spot on a team it was usually as a substitute or on the junior varsity. He worked hard in hopes of gaining a first team starting position. He made the grade as a junior when he became the starting center on the high school football team. Many years later, Coach John Warren described him to me as "the gutsiest little guy" he'd ever coached.

Hospital Orderly

Arvi concentrated so heavily on sports and other non-academic activities that he hardly realized he was not acquiring the necessary credits to advance a level in school. Consequently, rather than let me get further ahead of him, I was kept out of school the fall of 1933 at the age of fifteen. I later wondered if the time I spent visiting the *USS Constitution* ("Old Ironsides"), when she came to Astoria in May of 1933, was a contributing factor. Dad got me a job as an orderly at the Columbia Hospital, which was on 16th Street, a few blocks below the high school. For three months, I worked long hours with only one Sunday off. I frequently went onto the roof of the hospital for a smoke at about 8:30 in the morning, just so I could watch kids walk past on their way to the school. The hospital provided me with a room in a vacant wood frame building that had formerly housed nurses. The only other occupant in that house was the hospital custodian, a Mr. Peterson, who had a room at the other side of the building. The furniture, a single bed with a thin mattress on a coil spring, one straight back chair and a small nightstand, would not have sold for much in a rummage sale. My pay was to be $25 per month, plus room and board, but on my first payday, I was told that it was reduced to only $18 a month due to the hospital's financial problems.

Much of the work was fairly light, but there were times when it was good to be husky, such as the mornings when I had to pull huge,

fifty-pound slabs of ice from the under-the-floor freezer.

I had some unusual experiences at the hospital including the time when I went to mop the surgery room, a routine duty. I checked the surgery schedule, saw nothing was slated, and went to the third floor. There was no red light above the surgery door, so I proceeded to enter with my equipment. I was singing happily, backed through the doorway, and turned around only to see a team of doctors and nurses working on a patient. Man, I was out of there in a hurry. Shortly afterwards, I was questioned about the incident and received assurance that the nurse who had neglected to post the pending surgery, as well as turn on the warning light, had admitted to her carelessness.

Thanksgiving was nearing and Dad sent Arvi over to tell me to plan on being home on that day. It was the first time anyone in the family had contacted me in weeks. About a week later, on Thanksgiving

CCHS Acc# 98.001.004, AHS's 1936 Zephyrus.

1936 Hi-Y's

first row: Wiljo Green, Treasurer; Lyster, Thompson, Spexarth, Seeborg, Miller. *second row:* Lum, Nelson, Roger McManamna, Secretary; Hansen, Hendrickson, Anderson, Heckard. *third row:* Johanson, Bakkenson, Miller, Abrahamson, Nielson, Cook, Kenneth Olsen, President.

Under the guiding hand of Mr. Thompson, adviser, the Hi-Y's have enjoyed a most successful year. The boys have worked hard for their purpose, "to create, maintain, and extend throughout the school high standards of Christian character."

Outstanding activities of the club this year have been to sponsor the boys' minstrel Show, to send a delegation of seventeen boys and Mr. Thompson to the Older Boys' Conference, at Kelso, and to buy a hot dog steamer to make that delicious Hi-Y specialty in a more sanitary way; to sponsor a high school "Go to Church Sunday," an interclub hike up Saddle Mountain, Hi-Y interclass song contest, and the construction of a time clock for basketball games.

The membership is limited to twenty-one Juniors and Seniors who have leadership and a scholastic average of "G."

morning, Arvi was back to deliver Dad's instructions that I pack up my scant belongings and go home at once—to stay. I guess I was so glad to be home I didn't notice how nonchalant everyone seemed to be. It was as if I'd not been away. It was particularly gratifying to be reminded that the root beer I had made during the past summer was now ready to be served at the Thanksgiving dinner.

For a few weeks, I stayed at home and helped Mother with housework, learned how to bake cakes from scratch (my jelly rolls were really super), and listened to some great radio programs. I enjoyed "The Breakfast Club" in the mornings, "Fibber McGee and Molly" in the afternoons and "Amos and Andy" after supper. "Amos and Andy" was Dad's favorite radio show.

Nice Getting Back to School

Returning to school in January, after four months away, was excit-

CCHS Acc# 98.001.004, AHS's 1936 Zephyrus.

1936 Hi-Knights

front row: Melvin Northe, Treasurer; Reuben Jensen, Advisor; Ray Eskola, President; Bill Morris, Secretary; Ted Sarpola, Vice-President.
second row: Arvid Seeborg, Don Goodall, John Cederberg.
third row: Wilson Porter, Ken Olsen, John Seeborg

The Hi-Knight Club sprang into being on October 18, 1927, under the direction of Coach Sauers. The club helps to supervise and interest boys in all athletics and assists the coach and athletic manager. Under the adviserships of Reuben Jensen, the members mark off and patrol the football field and patrol the gym in basketball season. This year saw the beginning of a plan to build up the Hi-Knight club. The new step included stricter membership rules and enforcement of constitutional requirements. Its twelve members are chosen from the student body for their ability to serve and help keep order. Hot dog sales and dances contribute to the finances of the club.

ing. I was amazed how things fell into place. Two boys' clubs, the Hi-Y's and the Hi-Knights, invited me to join. I became very busy. My studies were time consuming and quite often I stayed in school until 5:00 or so, then carried additional work home.

Hugo was caretaker of the city park. He, Elva and their children, Mary Jo and Jimmy, lived in a small two-story house at the park entrance. I frequently walked there after school and spent the night. Usually, Hugo and Elva went visiting friends, which left me free to do school work after the children went to bed.

What a Dumb Stunt!

Later, in the early spring, Dr. Ragnor Kullberg decided I needed to have my tonsils removed. Nothing to it. Early one morning I met him at the old Columbia Hospital and, after a local anesthetic, he performed a tonsillectomy. Nothing to it. I had undressed and put on one of those hospital robes in a room down the hall from where the simple surgery was performed, so that's where the nurse steered me immediately afterwards. Nothing to it. I lay on the bed and tried to fall asleep. No luck. I searched around for something to read; again no luck. Hours passed and no one appeared to even say "Hello." I was extremely hungry by mid-afternoon and looked for some way to contact the office or kitchen. No luck. Finally I got dressed and slipped down the back stairway and out the back door. Nothing to it. It was raining hard. I walked the two miles home. Nothing to it. I ate Jello and more Jello until Mother sent someone out for ice cream and I got my fill of that. My throat wasn't even sore. Maybe a bit tender, but not sore. That evening, I felt so good that I decided I could eat some real food. I got out the hardtack, gave it a heavy coat of peanut butter and happily ate it. Nothing to it.

The next morning, I awoke and was surprised to see Dr. Kullberg bending over me and Mother and Dad standing at the foot of the bed. Oh oh. The hardtack had been a mistake. Mother had heard me gurgling and choking and got the doctor over in a hurry. It seems that I had been hemorrhaging. This time there really was something to it and the doctor let me know how terribly inconvenienced he was. He was to have left by train for Portland and now he had to get someone to drive him to the Union Depot in Portland. He was to attend the annual convention of the Medical Association. When he returned a week or so later, he told Dad that he wouldn't accept payment from him for my tonsillectomy, that he wanted me to be at his house early every Saturday morning to work odd jobs until the bill was paid. Saturday after Saturday, I sanded and painted furniture, mowed a

huge lawn, weeded flower gardens, and performed other sundry chores until one Saturday when I arrived, he asked me if I knew anything about badminton. I assured him, modestly of course, that I was probably the best badminton player in town. I helped him set up a net on his patio and for the next few Saturdays I taught him how to strike a shuttlecock. Nothing to it. It wasn't much longer when my bill was finally paid.

The most important extracurricular activity in the school was basketball. As I've written, some of the boys who had won the junior high championships at Capt. Robert Gray were now starters on the high school team. Ted Sarpola, Bobby Anet, Wally Johansen and Toivo Piippo were the key players and the team won the state championship that spring of 1934. At that time, the school had one coach, John Warren, who had no assistants, yet coached all sports in which the school participated: football, basketball and track. The basketball teams he coached were outstanding, winning about four state championships over a span of about ten years.

The Fall of 1934

Arvid and I entered the junior class in the fall of 1934. This was almost exactly a year after the terribly destructive Tillamook Fire destroyed thousands of acres of forest just south and southeast of Astoria in August of 1933. I remember days when the sun could not fully penetrate the smoke-filled sky and created a golden haze through the smoke. Some days, when the wind was from the south, ashes from the forest fire fell like a light snowfall on Astoria.

Arvi's passion for sports and his persistency earned him the coveted "A" and a letterman's sweater as he became a member of the prestigious "A" Club. He was on the varsity football team, playing center whenever he got into a game. He also played basketball on the junior varsity team. These were the "glory" years for both of us as I was elected president of the junior class and editor of the *Astor Post*, the school newspaper. With activities so diverse, our paths seldom crossed at school. The class presidency was an honor, which entailed virtually no work, but the school paper was a time-consuming activity. Again, I often found it necessary to stay in school for an hour or two after classes ended and still carry a load of work home - or to Hugo's and Elva's.

Basketball Tryout

Astoria High's basketball team was picked to repeat winning the state championship in March 1935 as most of the players were back from the previous year. One of the players sold Coach Warren on the idea that I was a mighty good

basketball player, with good ball handling skills. I was also a tough defender. The coach pestered me to try out, but I really did not feel I had the skills needed to make the team, although I had spent years playing with most of those already on the team. However, I acceded to the pressure and one afternoon joined the others in practice. After a period of warm-up drills, the coach set up a "skins and shirts" scrimmage. In a few minutes he sent me in to play. I thought I was sensational, stealing the ball a couple of times, making two or three baskets, taking the ball down the court and snapping sharp passes to teammates who scored. When the scrimmage was over, I delayed going into the locker room until all the others were out of the gym. I handed the ball to the coach and asked him, "How'd I do, Coach?" "What do you mean?" "Do you think I'll make the team?" He hesitated, rubbed his chin a little and said, "Yes, Mr. Seeborg," (he always addressed students by their last names) "I think you can. I expect one of the boys to drop out and if he does, I believe I can work you into the third team." I was stunned. I was really crushed. I didn't feel that making the third team was sufficient cause to give up the time it would take, and editing the school paper was already keeping me pretty busy. The team would have to win the state championship without me.

Self-Employed Partners

School activities during the spring of 1935 had absorbed so much of my time that I had not earned any money and saw little chance of getting to the basketball tournament in March. However, destiny decreed that I go. A close friend of mine, Cecil Wright, who was the school cheerleader, was as determined as I to go to that state basketball tournament. It was to be held at Willamette University in Salem. For several days, we considered several wild, money-making schemes before a logical one developed. He borrowed his father's old pickup truck and we got old gunny (burlap) sacks from various wholesale houses in town. We then went to a dairy farm near town and got permission to "help ourselves" to the cow manure. We sacked as much as we could haul in the pickup and drove to a residential area on Alameda Street, a block above Taylor Street in Uniontown. We sold out at our first and only stop: Fifty cents a sack or three for a dollar. For about a week we repeated doing this after school before the *Evening Astorian-Budget* lauded us in an editorial for being so enterprising. Apparently this offended grownups who felt chastised by the editorial. Suddenly our supply of free gunnysacks became an overhead expense and Cecil's father thought we should probably rent his pickup. I don't remember

if the manure would no longer be free or not, but we had more than reached our financial goal so we ended the venture.

When the tournament began, we checked in at the Senator Hotel in Salem and bought tickets for all of the games in which Astoria played. Of course, the Purple and Gold won the state championship again and three of the Uniontown boys were named to All-State teams.

More Cannery Work

During the summers of 1935 and 1936, I worked full time at the Union Fisherman's cannery from early May until mid-September. My job was similar to being a service station attendant. I pumped gas to the boats (the gas pump was at the north end of a net rack which extended to the river channel), and sold articles such as "blue stone" (copper sulfate), tan bark and oil from a building nearer to the cannery entrance. Since most of my activity was in the area of the supply building, it was a long walk to the gas pump where, whenever someone rang a bell for gas, I had to go. Even running back and forth, I often left an impatient fisherman waiting for me. To cut the time down, I bought a used, "like new" 3-speed bicycle with which to ride to the gas pump. It cost me $10. I became quite adept with the bike—or so I thought. But one day, I learned humility the hard way. I was riding full speed towards the river end of a net rack and meant to execute my usual quick stop by turning sharply and braking. The surface was still damp, however, from an earlier rain. Instead of stopping, the bicycle slid out from under me and continued eight or ten feet to the end of the dock and into the river, barely missing the gillnet boat tied up at the gas pump. Luckily, the fisherman in the boat had a grappling hook with which he pulled the bike to the surface. He threw the rope up to me and I pulled the bike up to the net rack.

It was necessary to keep accurate records of all sales as they were charged to the fishermen's accounts. Soon, I knew every fisherman by name. Fortunately, I could speak Finnish with those men whose English was limited.

In those days, no commercial fishing was permitted from Saturday noon until 6:00 pm Sunday. Consequently, my job was quite hectic on Saturday mornings. Nets needed to be "bluestoned" to cleanse them and I had to weigh and bag orders quickly. Large square, wooden tanks needed to be filled with water. The fishermen dissolved the gravel-like "blue stone" in the tanks and then put their nets in. After soaking for the prescribed time, the nets were removed onto hand trucks and taken to the net racks assigned to the fishermen for spreading. In the meantime, I was hosing down empty tanks

CCHS Image #19.067.009

The Pirates Den during Astoria Regatta

preparing for the next "blue-stone" treatment, chasing down the heavy hand trucks and pulling them back to the tank area, and handling the routine chores of pumping gas and selling oil, etc. Usually, timing was such that I was through by noon and could leave for the weekend. Occasionally, conditions were such that the activity was more than I could keep up with. My boss, Arnie Juola, seemed to have a sixth sense and would help me get things back under control. Usually, on those kinds of Saturdays, I wouldn't complete my job until about 1:00 o'clock. My pay during the two summers was $75 a month. In 1936, when my dock work was over, I was brought into the office to help the treasurer, Mr. Anet, with fishermen's accounts. I have never worked with more considerate people than Charles Anet and Arnie Juola.

A True Fish Story

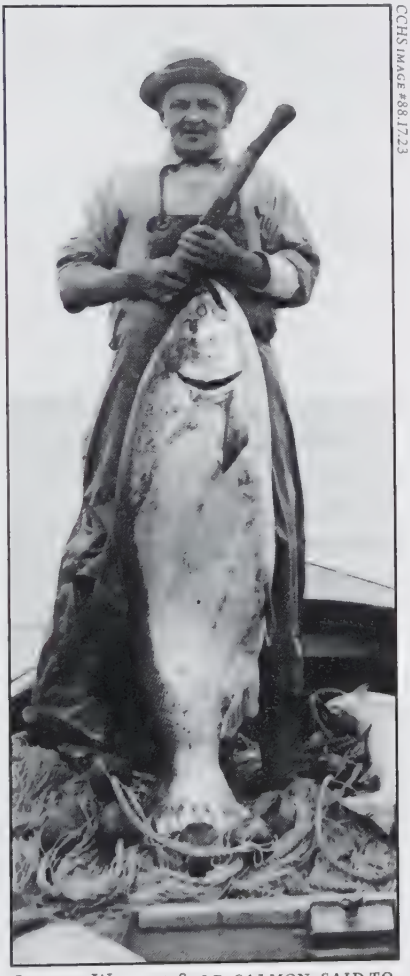
There were several incidents during those two summers, which are quite pleasant memories, but no need to relate them all. However one, which was so very unusual, occurred when I was attending the gas pump for Jalmer Wilson. He had placed the hose nozzle into his gas tank and looked up at me and said, "I caught a pretty big one last night. Want to see it?" With that, he removed the cover from his fish box and pulled out a huge Chinook salmon. Holding it by the gills with both hands he managed to raise it so the tail cleared the deck. I asked him to stall before taking it to the fish receiver so that I could call the *Astorian Budget*. As soon as I finished the task at hand, I raced my bike to the office and luckily caught Arnie Juola there. He called the *Astorian Budget* and had me go with him to the fish receiver's station at the river side of the cannery. He passed the word around and soon there was a large group of us waiting for Jalmer who then brought his boat to the station. The receiving box was lowered

and Jalmer promptly removed the salmon from his fish box and held it for all to see as he had done for me. A reporter and photographer arrived and took several pictures. The box was hoisted up and the salmon removed. Then, at Mr. Juola's request, Jalmer came up the ladder for more pictures, one with him holding that large, silvery salmon. I distinctly remember it weighed 108 pounds. Several years later, I happened to find a postcard, which contained a photo of Jalmer holding the salmon. That postcard gave the salmon's weight at considerably less than its actual weight had been, so I presume that the postcard showed the weight of the salmon dressed.

Romance Has Its Complications

When it came to friends, Arvi and I sort of mixed with different groups. Sort of, that is, because there came a time when we somehow were dating sisters. Not twins, either. I believe I first dated Jessie once or twice before Arvi got into the picture and made it a foursome with Jessie's sister. At sixteen, Jessie was a year younger than I while Arvid was a year younger than Edwina. Evenings, we walked about two miles to the girls' home and were greeted warmly. Their mother was really nice to us, made us feel welcome and usually served us pie or cake.

But their father. Oh my! He always came home late (he owned an auto service business in town) and gave us the cold shoulder. Frigid would be more accurate. The mother guided him into the kitchen quickly. He obviously was displeased at our presence in his home. One evening, he stormed into the house and lost



CCHS IMAGE #88.17.23

Jalmer Wilson, 83 lb. salmon, said to be largest caught in Astoria area.

his cool when he saw Arvi and me there again. He raised his voice and yelled something about us never staying home, and did we have to be there every evening. Never before had I heard such expletives in the presence of ladies. The mother steered him into their bedroom and he continued his tirade there. Arvi and I proceeded to leave and, despite the girls' protests and apologies, we left. We continued to date for a while, but we four arranged to be out walking when their father arrived home from work. When we were ready to take them home, we dropped them off at the door. The romance gradually ended, as most teen-age romances tend to do.

About three years later, after I returned home from the army, Jessie and I happened to meet downtown and we sat in Lawson's Confectionery for a couple of hours, sipping Cokes and getting reacquainted. We never dated again, which was more my loss than her's. Later I learned that she had been a finalist in a Miss Oregon contest. She should have won.

Regatta

Each year during the last week of August, a regatta was held in Astoria. In addition to outboard motor boat races, gillnet boat races and sailboat races, there were other activities to entertain the people. One popular event was called "The Pirates' Den." The armory near the downtown waterfront was converted into a dance hall, a tavern and a casino, all in one. To gamble, one had to buy script and try to win prizes as was done in carnivals. Beer flowed freely and it wasn't difficult for us teens to buy a beer (with script) when the bar was busy. There were a couple of casino games also, such as black jack and stud poker which we teenagers usually had no problem playing. And of course there was a live band formed by local musicians who could play like the "big bands" of the day. Most of us in our crowd liked dancing.

Another event, far less popular, was a swimming contest for my age group. We were taken by boat about fifty yards out into the river channel and, at the gun, dived in and raced to the waterfront. In front of the grandstand was a scow on which the judges and officials were waiting, some of whom were to reach down from the scow to help us get aboard. One race in particular was run when the tide was ebbing strongly, causing us swimmers to head obliquely upstream in order to avoid missing the scow. However, when I reached the scow, I was still slightly upstream from it and, as the current carried me to the upper end of it, I reached up but there was no one there to give me a hand. I did the only thing I could. I took a deep breath, ducked under the scow and swam the length of it downstream, feeling its slimy bottom as I went, and I soon popped

up at the lower end. As I reached the surface, I was gasping for air and heard the announcer call, "There he is." Then there was applause from the spectators in the grandstand. I swam to where the men were and was pulled aboard to the sound of more applause as the announcer named me the winner of the race. Some fun.

Sailing

A friend and neighbor, Ed Niska, acquired a whaling boat and converted it into a sailboat, completing the project in the spring of 1936. It had a centerboard, which could be raised by hand instead of being pivoted upward. This was necessary to increase the draft, especially when in shallow water or over a sandbar. He asked me to join him as his one-man crew and we made frequent short runs up and down the Columbia River when we were off work. Probably my most thrilling runs were when we sailed to the bar at the mouth of the river as the incoming tide began and the northwest wind increased in intensity. We would then put out the spinnaker (the mainsail was already billowing) and head up river towards Astoria. The tide and the wind combined to give us maximum speed. Both of us had to sit on the gunnel to reduce the heavy list of the boat, Ed handling the rudder. We would sail at high speed all the way to the Astoria port docks before slowing down. It was truly exciting and exhilarating.

Every year from August 25th to September 10th, no commercial fishing was allowed in order that a portion of the salmon run could reach spawning grounds up river. In 1936, Ed Niska and I took advantage of this time off to sail to Quincy, about 45 miles up river. He had met my cousin, Roma, and wanted to see her again. It was a marvelous sailing trip. About halfway there, we were skimming the water and passed a tug which was towing a huge log raft. Shortly after that, the wind died down and the tug caught up with us, so we tied on to the rear of the log raft. When it was time for dinner we fired up a Swede stove on the raft and proceeded to cook a meal. The men on the tug yelled and waved for us to get off the raft and we did, but not before we finished our meal. The wind came up, so we passed the tug again and we waved to the skipper like old friends. He smiled and waved back, probably grateful his logs weren't afire.

Early in the evening, we spotted a small, sandy beach on the Washington side, so we pulled the boat ashore and spent the night there, sleeping on the beach after another hearty meal. The next morning, we reached the farm country of Quincy and docked the boat less than half a mile from cousin Roma's home. We were houseguests there for a few days,

taking in a dance in Clatskanie and a fall festival there. Ed and Roma got along so well that when it came time for us to leave on the 10th, Ed dallied so long it was afternoon before we left. Fishing season was open again that evening and we were supposed to be at work in the cannery at 8:00 the next morning.

We sailed without any problems until shortly after dark when we barely avoided sailing into a jetty made of pilings. But we turned ninety degrees so sharply we took on enough water to soak our supplies and I had to stand on the gunnel and keep us clear of the jetty until we were back in the channel. Our batteries got wet, so we had no lights of any kind. There were shore lights at times to guide us and the moon helped provide light much of the time. There were many times when we sailed in almost pitch darkness, straining our eyes searching for the slightest shadow to prevent running into jetties or onto the shore. We were lucky to stay clear of any such hazards, but six times we ran up on sandbars and it was the deck hand's duty to jump over the side and push the boat clear. Finally we reached Cathlamet Bay and could see Tongue Point ahead. As we rounded Tongue Point, it was about 3:00 a.m. and the lights of Astoria came into view as did the running lights of gillnet boats drifting in the river. We approached one fishing craft fairly close and Ed picked up his foghorn and blew a loud blast. The fisherman popped up from his little cabin and we could see him searching for the vessel responsible for the foghorn, but since we had no lights and it was dark, we were sure he never saw us. After docking at the cannery we hurried to our homes for about four hours sleep before going to work.

Seniors At Last

Arvi's and my senior year in high school was full of activities; Arvi became a starter on the football team; I continued working on the school paper, but that year as sports editor. Coach John Warren had left for the University of Oregon to be its freshman basketball coach—much less work and considerably better pay. The U. of O.'s new varsity basketball coach, Howard Hobson, wanted the boys who had won two consecutive basketball championships in high school to be playing for him. Four of the boys followed Warren to the university. Four years later, these players were on the Oregon basketball team that won the very first N.C.A.A. national basketball championship on March 27, 1939.

Before Hobson had convinced the boys to join him at the University, he appeared at the Union Fishermen's cannery one day looking for Sarpola, Johansen, Anet, and Piippo. He had an entourage of five or six with him. Apparently not knowing where the boys were, they came to the

CCHS Acc#98.001.004, AHS's 1936 Zephyrus.

1936 Astor Post staff

first row: McManamna, Green, Cook, Lum, Curry, Ash, Gramms, Howard, Ihander, Booth. *second row:* Yost, Salisbury, McMindes, Rinell, Laughlin, Malen, Schwab, Hoyt, (John) Seeborg. *third row:* Trench, Wahl, Maunula, Yrjana, L'Amie, Kruckman, Nelson, Hughes, Hansen, Olsen. *fourth row:* Erickson, Christensen, Larson, Parhaniemi, Burlingame, Rones, Rosenwald, Wirkkanen, Ash, Howell, Lum, Ames, Wilson, Walker. *fifth row:* Morgan, Anderson, Hannala, Pesonen, Gore, ,Johnson, Matzger. *sixth row:* Eskola, C. Grimberg, Kruckman, Elliott, Kelley, Van Dusen, W. Grimberg.

dock where I was working. After I acknowledged that I knew the boys and that I believed they were at work, Hobson directed me to go get them. "Direct" is too mild; he ordered me. The fact that I didn't know Hobson or any of his "lackeys" didn't matter. Had I known he was as important as he tried to be, I would still have declined. A few words were exchanged between us before he left in a huff and entered the cannery. Maybe the fish smell didn't appeal to him for he and his followers left the cannery a few brief minutes later. He must have tried to order Arnie Juola or one of the other bosses who were inside the cannery.

Back to our senior year. Arvi liked to tinker with cars. He wasn't as inclined towards the mechanics of autos necessarily, but in driving them. It shouldn't have been a surprise then, that while unemployed and with no apparent source of income, he suddenly became the owner of a Chevrolet roadster. As memory serves me; I believe it was a simple two door with a rumble seat. The top was removable as well. Well, one afternoon about five, I was on my way home from school and carrying a load of homework and other stuff. A car horn beeped several times, and I heard girls calling my name. I turned and saw Arvi driving his car slowly towards me with at least four girls in it. They all waved and called as they passed me. I still had a long walk home, up Commercial Street hill. Arvi arrived home alone and blissfully unconcerned that I was irritated at him. It seems that he had acquired a world of new friends, most of them girls who needed a ride somewhere. Things of course had not changed for me. I still walked to and from school, often going to Lewis and Clark school to sweep classrooms for Dad.

In the Press Box

State basketball tournament time arrived again and this time I had no money and no one willing to sell fertilizer with me. On the morning of the first day of the tourney, I was in class when the principal, Mr. Emmett Towler, sent for me. With him was Mr. Merle Chessman, publisher and editor of the local newspaper. He had a problem; his sports reporter, who was to cover the tournament, had not shown up for work for a couple of days and Mr. Chessman wanted me to handle the assignment. I was off and running, taking a bus to Portland and then to Salem. I was at Willamette University a few minutes before game time. The box office had not received word that I was to get a press pass so I had to buy a general admission ticket. The press box was at the center of the sideline and included about four tiers of seats with a Western Union operator on the top row. A university student blocked me from entering the press

box and refused to even consider that what I said was true, that there was to have been a press box pass waiting for me. I had to find a seat high up behind the backboard. There wasn't even enough room for me to open my oversized scorebook. My mind was spinning as I tried to figure a way to keep score, and how I was going to get a report to the Astoria newspaper.

The teams, one of which was Astoria High, the state champions for the two previous years, were at the sidelines. The officials were ready to start the game when over the P. A. system a voice loudly and clearly said, "John Seeborg, report to the press box immediately." As I walked down to the gym floor and along the sideline, it seemed that they were delaying the game, waiting for me to get to the press box. Once there, I was confronted by the same college "sentry" who had stopped me earlier. Again I explained that a press box pass had been ordered and was probably in the office, but he became more arrogant and adamant than ever, and told me to leave. About then, two reporters sitting in the press box first row stood and began putting their coats on. One said, "If the state champions can't be represented in the press box, then our papers aren't interested in this tournament." This action created quite a stir. Some fans became more interested in the press box activity than the basketball game that was underway.

Another college student came over and the reporters explained the situation to him. He told the first student to get to the office and check out my story; the second student obviously was in charge. He told me to go ahead and have a seat and this problem would be resolved after the game. The reporters then had me sit between them. They were the sports editors of the two largest newspapers in Oregon, L. H. Gregory of the *Oregonian* and the reporter from the *Oregon Journal* whose name I have forgotten. Gregory was one of the most renowned sports writers in America. When the game ended, they asked me if I had a lead in mind for my story, and when I read it to them, they acted impressed and asked if they could also use it. Wow! I wrote my story and passed it up to the telegraph operator who was rushing me, saying the *Evening Astorian-Budget* was pressing him for it. I made the deadline for the afternoon edition and the transcript was pasted on the window of the Western Union office in downtown Astoria.

A press box pass was given to me and I spent the rest of the week watching ball games, reporting the Astoria High games in detail by telegraph and wiring a brief summary of the other games. Astoria won its first two games, lost the third, then won the final game for third place. One of

my closest friends, Ted Sarpola, was named to the All-State first team for the third consecutive year. Prior to that, only one player had been on the All-State team three times. Frankly, I have to admit it was somewhat of a thrill when I got home to see my articles on the front page of each day's *Budget*, not to mention seeing the Western Union window plastered with all the wires that I had sent. Incidentally, more than fifty years later, Eddie and I were reminiscing and I learned that he had covered a state basketball tournament for the *Evening Astorian-Budget* five years before I did.

Graduation

High school graduation day arrived in late May 1936. My job at the cannery began early that month, so it was necessary that I take final exams after working hours. One evening, I went to a teacher's house for an exam and on a Saturday, I met a teacher at the school. I didn't realize then that it was more inconvenient for the teachers than for me, but they went out of their way to give me the opportunity to take the required exams. In any event, I passed and joined my twin brother at the graduation exercise. One feature of our graduation was that Wayne Morse was the speaker. At that time he was head of the law department at the University. Later, he became a U. S. Senator. Arvi and I each received one graduation gift: a pair of socks from our parents. We were fortunate that they could spare the money.

Gillnet Fishing on the Columbia

Dad had not been gillnet fishing since he was in his teens, but income was so essential to supplement his meager salary, he decided to give it a try. In 1934, he purchased the material needed to make a net at home. He acquired wooden needles, lots of linen "thread", and rigged a knitting setup in the kitchen. Everyone old enough to knit was taught the process with instructions that someone should be knitting net all the time. Whenever one of us entered the kitchen and knitting was not going on, it was our responsibility to pick up the needles and knit, even if for only a few minutes. Once the net itself was complete, it was attached to a lead line and cork line, one to pull the net down, the other to keep it afloat. Thus the net was vertical in the water and floated with the tide. This was called a "drift" and salmon swimming into the net were caught by the gills.

Gillnetting Can Become Hazardous

Swimming in the surf which was pounding on the rocks of the south jetty was an option Arvi and I were having to consider in pitch darkness late one night. This experience began one evening in

mid-August, 1936. Dad had taken his regular vacation from his school job and rented a gillnet boat; Arvi was his "boat puller" (gillneteese for deckhand). The salmon run had entered the Columbia River during this period for probably thousands of years; hence it was expected to happen again soon.

One evening just before quitting time, Arvi caught me on my job on the Union Fishermen's docks and told me that Dad wanted me to go along that evening because he was suffering from a migraine headache; Dad had a history of severe migraines. During the day he had been studying tide tables and decided to lay out the net in the ship channel rather than cross over to the Washington side where most of the fishermen usually went to lay out their nets.

As soon as Dad arrived, we headed for the port docks, just a stone's throw west of the Union Fisherman's Cannery, and I laid out the net while Arvi operated the boat. Then we began our drift, letting the outgoing tide take us past Warrenton. We spotted some dips in the cork line, so Dad had us pull the boat along that line and check out those dips. Each one had several salmon caught in the net. Arvi was told to start the one h.p. standard engine and take the boat to the end of the net where we tied it to the boat and pulled the net slowly to get it straightened. We drifted awhile longer before Dad said we'd better take the net in. The wet net was heavy, so I helped Arvi pull it into the boat while Dad was at the wheel. Soon we had all available space full of fish. We were floating over the bar in heavy fog, so Dad had us take the rest of the net into the boat with the salmon still in it.

We had been listening to the surf breaking onto the jetty as we pulled the remaining net aboard. The roar of the surf increased. When the entire net was aboard, we couldn't get the engine started. To start it, one had to turn the heavy steel flywheel by hand while cupping the carburetor with the other hand. After several tries, Arvi had me spell him. We alternated a few times, noticing the sound of the surf steadily becoming louder. We could not see due to the fog, but we could assume how close we were getting to the rocks. Arvi blew the foghorn, then relieved me at the engine, when a voice called out of the fog, "Do you need help?" Just then Arvi got the engine sputtering and in a few seconds had it running smoothly. We could see the trawler very near and the man aboard told us to follow him. We did until Dad could see Buoy 12, or whatever number it was, at the entrance to the bar, and we waved the trawler skipper off with thanks. I placed an oilskin raincoat on top of the net where the excess fish were still stirring and immediately fell asleep

on it. A while later, Arvi woke me to take the wheel while he slept where I had lain. Dad, sick and exhausted, was asleep in the tiny cabin.

We reached the cannery and unloaded nineteen hundred pounds of loose Chinook salmon, then moored the boat. Dad went back to sleep while Arvi and I went home for a few hours sleep, then returned to the mooring before 7:00 the next morning. Arvi and I pulled the net up onto the net rack as Dad freed the rest of the fish. He and Arvi turned in another nine hundred pounds to the cannery. I began another day's work. At ten cents a pound Dad received the sum of $280.00 for one night's work. That was equivalent to almost six weeks' work as a school janitor.

An August Salmon Run

The catch of practically a ton and a half of salmon which Dad turned in to the Union Fisherman's Cannery that morning set machinery in motion throughout the community of commercial fishermen. Arvi and I finished pulling the net up on the rack at about 7:30, and I expected time to grab breakfast. Not so fast. A wave of Finnish fishermen was already at my supply "house" obtaining supplies. Arnie Juola, the cannery superintendent, was there, doing my job. I pitched in and handled the transactions, frequently having to zip on my bicycle to the end of the adjoining net rack to deliver gasoline. Seems that just as soon as one group was tended to, another arrived. I wasn't aware when Mr. Juola left, but he returned often to help me catch up. This went on all day. That evening after dark, the boat lights on the river appeared like a spread-out city. The August run had arrived. For the next several days, fishermen flooded the canneries with salmon, Dad included. Unfortunately, the canneries dropped the price paid for salmon from ten cents a pound to three cents a pound the very next day.

Other Activities

Besides tending to my summer job as dock man at the cannery, I joined friends at Saturday night dances. Our favorite dance halls were the I.O.O.F. hall (Independent Order of Odd Fellows) and Amato's Supper Club in downtown Astoria, Suomi Hall in Uniontown, and everyone's favorite, "The Bungalow" ballroom in Seaside. I loved to dance and, luckily for me, many girls seemed to enjoy dancing with me. "The Bungalow" was where the big bands often appeared. Ballroom dancing (fox trots, waltzes and tangos) was the "in" thing, but we often went to Suomi Hall in Uniontown and added two-steps, polkas and schottisches to our repertoires. Of the big bands that performed at "The

Bungalow," the one I remember the clearest was the Phil Harris band. I had a date that Saturday night despite the $1.00 admission charge. We got there early so as to "park" ourselves right next to the bandstand, and we moved occasionally just enough to consider it dancing, but we stayed right there during the entire performance—and loved it. I could probably describe each "act" even now, but suffice to say, we had a memorable evening.

Some week day evenings, we would meet at someone's home to play "Monopoly," a board game introduced the previous winter, or play card games such as Pinochle or Hearts. It was common to listen to radio shows such as Bob Hope, Fred Allen, or various quiz shows, not to mention big name bands. But for many of us boys, spending evenings playing basketball was our favorite activity. You'll notice that what we did was almost always free; no one had spending money. I couldn't always raise even 75 cents to get into a dance at "The Bungalow." But we didn't seem to mind because practically everyone in our crowd was in a similar position. And the girls we dated didn't expect us to have funds for dinners and shows.

Meeting the Real World

Politics became very important because the unemployment problem was so severe, and wars were expanding in Europe and Asia. Roosevelt made a campaign promise that jobs would become plentiful for young men. He didn't say we were to be in uniform. The reelection of Roosevelt by a landslide was promising, but results were slow in coming. In high school, I had developed a strong desire to attend West Point and Dad had exchanged letters with Congressman James A. Mott about the possibility of a direct appointment. By the time my cannery job had ended, we had not received a conclusive response from the congressman. The folks had made a plea to those of us still living at home to help raise money to meet Uncle Alex's note which was falling due. Of course, some of us gave what we had, which was not much, and I understand the note was paid off all right.

Trying the Mills in Longview and Portland

I was following any lead in my search for work. No luck. College was out of the question. Late one September morning, I had stopped for coffee at a waterfront cafe at about 12th Street. Coffee and a doughnut took ten cents from my only quarter, leaving me the grand sum of three nickels in change. I dropped one nickel into a pinball machine and immediately started playing a winning streak into five or six dollars. While I was doing this, a friend watched and proceeded to urge me to accompany him on a

boat ride upriver to Longview. He said the lumber mills there were hiring. A steamboat whistle blew just outside the cafe and, at George's urging, I cashed in my nickels and rushed aboard the boat with him. I paid the 75 cents fare to Longview and we were on our way. I believe the boat was a stern-wheeler named the *Georgianna*. We stopped at almost every dock between Astoria and Longview, dropping off and picking up freight, before reaching our destination late that afternoon. We checked in at a workmen's hotel called "The St. Helens Inn." My room was small, barely large enough for a cot, a table and a chair, but it was clean and cost a mere 50 cents a night. I spent two mornings canvassing the area mills and learned that my friend was in error. No jobs were available. In the evenings, I played some pinball machines, but never won more than a dollar or two at a time. My luck was running out.

After lunch on the second day, I decided to leave Longview. I learned that the fare on a city bus was a quarter, and the Longview bridge toll was also a quarter. So, in order to save a valuable 25 cents, I walked a long way to the bridge, paid the quarter to walk across only to learn that had I ridden the bus across the bridge, I would not have had to pay a bridge toll. In any event, the walk did me no harm. At the junction of Highway 30 in Rainier, I knew it was necessary to hitchhike, so I thumbed each car that passed, regardless of which direction it was going. In a few minutes, I was picked up and headed east. That made Portland my next destination. I reached Uncle Ed's home in Portland in time for Aunt Effie's dinner. I don't believe it had occurred to me until then that my parents probably had no idea what I was doing or where I was. Uncle Ed called my mother for me. That evening, I called Ruth, a girl I had met at a dance in Seaside, and she invited me over. It was another long walk but once at Ruth's home, the reward was delicious cake, coffee and a marvelous evening. We played her records and danced in the kitchen. Her parents went to a double feature movie, so it was almost midnight before they returned. Then came still another long walk, this time back to Uncle Ed's house.

My cousin, Johnny Reinikka, had a job in a lumber mill and he helped me try to find work in Portland, but it was the same old story. Unemployed married men with experience were also trying to find work. Uncle Ed gave me bus fare home.

How the Union "Helped""

My older brother, Eddie, left his job as a cereal chemist at the Pillsbury mill where he had worked for three years. He and Laura moved to Berkeley, California so he could attend the University of California. I

had applied for his job in the Astoria mill and the plant manager assured me the job was mine providing the labor union local gave its approval. The union had a "closed shop" agreement with Pillsbury, but I thought I had an inside track for the job. I felt confident that the union would approve my employment, partly because I was acquainted with the union secretary, Jack M., who was a close friend of my older brother, Hugo. But Jack scoffed at the idea of letting the mill employ a non-union man when some members of that local were still unemployed. I argued that none of those unemployed men wanted to become a cereal chemist but he said that was beside the point. I called on the Pillsbury mill manager one more time after I returned from Portland. He advised me again of the need to get union approval. I asked the union secretary one final time. Jack, speaking for the union, said, "No deal." It was like trying to find a bucket of steam.

Eddie's Visit to Gray School

There was a time, probably in 1931, when for some reason I was told to preside at a Gray School junior high assembly. The most important item on the agenda—at least to me—was big brother Eddie's visit to our school from the high school. The time came to introduce Eddie, and I undoubtedly tried to impress on the students how fortunate we were to have a visit from an alumnus who was such an important wheel at the high school. As Eddie advanced to the front of the auditorium, he modestly claimed that he was not deserving of such an introduction. Then he announced that his purpose in appearing was simply to promote some high school function to which we all were invited. My introduction lasted longer than his appearance.

Eddie's Collision Course

About ten years later, when he was employed as a cereal chemist at the Pillsbury mill and I was a postal letter carrier, he was involved in a baseball mishap. I got home from work and was greeted by Laura who was visibly upset. Eddie was sleeping in the bedroom at the head of the stairway as Laura and I went up the stairs to see him. Mother was in the room with him. Then I got the whole story: Eddie was in a baseball game at a Pillsbury picnic, playing in the outfield. He went running after a fly ball, only to collide head-on with a teammate chasing the same fly ball. When he recovered consciousness, he was brought home, apparently suffering from a concussion. He had a large bump on his head, and I'm sure he had a severe headache when he awoke. I had never known Eddie to play baseball before, and I'd wager he didn't play much afterwards.

Teenagers Visit Salem

In March of 1935, during the state basketball tournament in Salem, a friend of mine accompanied me in visiting my sister, Hannah, who was a patient in the state tuberculosis sanitarium. A couple of months earlier, Arvid had driven her from our home to the hospital for treatment of pleurisy, a disease very similar to tuberculosis. Her boss, Al Norblad, had considerable political clout, and had managed to get her admitted into the sanitarium for rest and treatment of her painful ailment.

She was delighted to see us, of course, but it was apparent that she was still ill. During our visit, she was abed in a large room open to the outdoors. Several other patients shared the room with her. She seemed to enjoy our talk about the tournament, particularly when we mentioned the players who were from our Church Hill neighborhood. Several months later she returned home, recovered.

A Tour of the Asylum

A few days later, we decided to visit the state hospital, better known to us kids as the insane asylum. There were three carloads of us Astoria kids in our group. We parked at the curb near where some trustees were tending the hospital lawn. As we unloaded onto the sidewalk, one of the trustee inmates called loudly, "Hello, Seeborg." Naturally, I took some ribbing, but I recognized the man as a former W. Franklin Street neighbor of ours on Church Hill. I also remembered the publicity he had received in the Astoria newspaper when he reported that a large swan had flown into a window of his home. That imagined report must have been the catalyst that resulted in his permanent confinement. Visiting the asylum was mindboggling. An attendant guided us around and let us see how inmates behaved in their mentally collapsed state, from some who merely stood motionless, staring into space, to others who spoke gibberish as they gestured animatedly to an imaginary audience. It was difficult to comprehend that a human mind could go so berserk.

Uniontown: A Mecca for Dedicated Drinkers

One morning, I returned home from a futile job-seeking effort (I was 18 then) and Mother was having coffee in the kitchen with a neighbor, a Mrs. J. I didn't want to intrude, so I stayed in the next room. The ladies' conversation turned to the problem of young men in Uniontown who were heavy drinkers. Mrs. Joki, whose two sons in their late 20's were reputedly leaders among the crowd of drinkers, made the comment, "I'm sure glad my boys don't drink—(pause)—except they drink so much water in the mornings." Exactly what drunks do when sobering up.

The commercial district of Uniontown included several taverns, all established in 1933 with the repeal of Prohibition. At first, "near beer" was the strongest legal alcoholic drink available. Its alcoholic content was limited to 4.2 percent. However, bootleg whiskey was available, and some customers who were ostensibly drinking beer in the taverns were suspected of having smuggled in whiskey. Drunks staggering out of taverns were not uncommon.

There was one man in particular who was an alcoholic and was seldom seen sober. His name was a Terho, pronounced "tare'-haw" (with a Finnish accent.) He was a harmless, happy go-lucky drunk who always seemed to be entering or leaving one of the taverns. At times, he would go behind the taverns on the north side of the street, find a brushy area and lie down for a nap. I don't know where he stayed on cold, rainy nights. Maybe he had a home.

West Point?

For a couple of weeks, I worked at the school helping Dad until finally we got another letter from Congressman Mott. That letter advised us that the next opportunity he had to appoint a West Point cadet would not occur until just before I reached the age limit and, if I failed then to beat the competition, I would not get another chance. He suggested I consider enlisting in the army and applying for a presidential appointment through an army West Point prep school. That way I could apply for one of several presidential appointments as well as become better qualified to try for the congressman's single appointment when it became available.

After a brief conference with Mother and Dad, I went to talk to an army recruiter. The army, I learned, had two bases, which had West Point prep schools, one in Texas, the other in Hawaii. I signed up for Hawaii and was on my way a day or two later. The date I left Astoria was October 8, 1936. There was no fanfare, nor any parties. Not even phone calls. The harsh reality that my financial situation would prevent me from going to college only strengthened my hopes of getting into West Point. A presidential or congressional appointment was my best chance.

This ends our three-part presentation of the boyhood recollections of John Seeborg. The rest of his story, plus the histories of many other Clatsop County residents, may be found in the archives of the Clatsop County Historical Society.

The Editor

Image courtesy of the Editor.

fisherman's warehouse located on Gnat Creek near Blind Slough. Built by Union Cannery in 1928 with shares sold to the fishermen. There were fourteen shares with one share being held by the cannery. All shares presently are held by the Takalo and Westerholm families.